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## Foundation Goals

The objectives of the Canadian National Autism Foundation are charitable. The Canadian National Autism Foundation has been formed to provide funding for:

- \* Educating the general public and professionals;
- \* Providing information and resources to families of children with autism;
- \* Providing funding for Canadian based research and development; and
- \* Promoting national autism awareness

## Mission Statement

The Canadian National Autism Foundation promotes the positive improvement and quality of life for people with autism in Canada.

Announcing the Release of our New CD!  
Go to <http://www.cnaf.net/fundraisers.html>  
to hear a 1 minute audio clip and order the  
new song by Victoria Boland



“Don't Give Up On Me (Autism)”

## Upcoming CNAF Events

*3<sup>rd</sup> Annual CNAF Golf Tournament  
Summer 2006  
Celebrity Guest Golfer  
Walter Gretzky*



*\$100.00 per person*

## Upcoming Events

*5<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner & Dance with  
Live Auction & Comedy Show  
Friday, October 27, 2006*



*To read more about the comedy show, go to  
[http://www.eventureentertainment.com/com\\_ccwrp.ftm](http://www.eventureentertainment.com/com_ccwrp.ftm)*

## **Researchers Who Need Your Help**

Research is being conducted at both McMaster University in Hamilton and at the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children. The researchers are always looking for participants, some on site, and some through surveys. We asked them for a listing of current studies that they are looking for participants for.

### **McMaster University ~ Mel Rutherford, PhD.**

Our main project for recruiting is the **EARLY SIGNS OF AUTISM** study. We are looking at 4 visits from babies 3, 6, 9, and 12 months old which last about an hour in length and involves brief games and video with eyetracking to test the earliest social skills. One of the child's parents is included in the testing. Follow-up tests are done in the preschool period. We believe this research will help us develop very early diagnostic tests for autism. For that reason we are targeting babies who have a sibling already diagnosed with autism.

Another project we are looking at is our **FACE PERCEPTION** study. We need young men and women 18 - 25 years of age with autism and from the community to see how well they can identify differences in 2 very similar faces. We know the ability to discriminate between faces improves with experience during childhood. The social experiences of kids with and without autism are quite different. We want to see what impact if any that has on their ability to perceive faces as adults.

To participate in one of these studies, go to <http://www.science.mcmaster.ca/psychology/rutherford/study.html>

### **Autism Research Unit ~ The Hospital for Sick Children ~ Toronto, Ontario Co-Directors: Dr. Wendy Roberts, Dr. Jessica Brian**

#### **INFANT SIBLING STUDY**

Purpose: to study the siblings of children with ASD from six months every three months until 18 months and then at 2, 3 and 5 years in hopes of identifying early signs of autism to eventually lead to better intervention and outcomes. Who can join? Babies from 6 months to 9 months of age who have one or more siblings with autism. Contact: Bonnie MacKinnon, Noel Grzetic or Tracey McMullen at 416-813-8749

#### **GENETICS STUDY**

Purpose: to help in the identification of gene(s) that may predispose one to an ASD and/or speech and language disorder. Who can join? Families who have one or more children (2-18 years) who are suspected of, or diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Can also include families who have close relatives within the autism spectrum. Contact: Lili Senman 416-813-6307 or Becky Baatjes 416-813-7654, ext. 1289

#### **MAGNETOENCEPHALOGRAPHY (MEG) STUDY**

Purpose: to study brain signals during speech and language processing in individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Asperger Syndrome, speech and language impairment and a control group. MEG is a new, noninvasive neuroimaging technology offering a unique opportunity to investigate how neurons in the auditory cortex respond to sounds and speech. Who can join? Individuals (8-18 years) with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Asperger Syndrome, speech and language impairment, or individuals with no family history of these conditions. Contact: Tracey McMullen 416-813-8748

#### **EPILEPSY AND AUTISM STUDY**

Purpose: to explore and better understand the prevalence and nature of ASD in the paediatric epilepsy population. In order to effectively characterize this population we are interested in comparing children who have epilepsy with and without symptoms of ASD and children with ASD both with and without epilepsy. Who can join? Individuals (2-18 years). Contact: Hayley Wood 416-813-8748

## Interesting Information

This month, May 2006, the Canadian National Autism Foundation donated **\$10 000** to the **Hospital for Sick Children ~ Autism Genome Project** and **\$5 000** to Dr. Melissa Rutherford at **McMaster University**, for continuation of her Longitudinal Study to Assess the Development of Children in their first year who may be at risk for autism.

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### **Autism Genome Project ~ The Hospital for Sick Children ~ 180 Researchers Worldwide**

The Autism Genome Project is an unprecedented initiative that is part of a global research collaboration to characterize the human genome in search of autism susceptibility genes. Dr. Szatmari of the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster Children's Hospital is co-director of the project with Stephen Scherer at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

More than 180 scientists from 11 countries are involved in the initiative. Although it is generally agreed that a strong genetic basis underlies the condition, the causes of autism are still unknown. The Autism Genome Project will screen genomes from more than 6,000 members of 1,600 families to find where susceptibility genes reside along the chromosomes. Advanced genomic methods will then be used to assess the DNA in these chromosome regions in order to identify disease-associated genes.

Because the project will also incorporate genetic information about autism into health care delivery and policy development, "there is real potential for it to lead to new and more accurate tests that will allow for earlier diagnosis and intervention.

### **Longitudinal Study to Assess the Development of Children in their First Year who may be at risk for Autism ~ Dr. Melissa Rutherford, Ph.D. ~ McMaster University**

Background. Last year the Canadian National Autism Foundation provided an initial grant to fund a pilot project that was a follow-up to the journal based case study published in the journal *Neurocase* (Rutherford, 2005). This study reported a retrospective case-study based on examination of meticulous journals kept by a mother of twins, one of whom developed autism, and one who developed typically. Based on the information gathered from this case study, a longitudinal study was designed to assess the development of children in their first year who may be at risk for autism. At this time, Dr. Rutherford wishes to develop an effective test that can distinguish children who will develop autism from those who are typically developing in their first year.

Dr. Rutherford is happy to report that over the past year, with the help of the funding that the Canadian National Autism Foundation provided, her laboratory has developed this project and is currently gathering data from very young children who are at risk for autism, as well as low-risk controls. Although she does not have the statistical power yet to report anything with certainty, she is extremely optimistic that even at six months there will be reliable differences in the way children developing with and without autism respond to visual social stimuli.

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We at the Canadian National Autism Foundation look forward to hearing the results of both of these valuable research studies.

We will keep you posted on their progress in future issues of our newsletter.

# Did You Know!

It is the 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary for  
Dr. Melissa Rutherford, PhD. as a  
member of the CNAF Board of Directors!

## How to Contact Us

### **Mailing Address**

1227 Barton Street East,  
PO Box 47577  
Hamilton, Ontario  
L8H 2V0

### **Phone Number**

905-643-7183

### **Fax Number**

905-643-0969

### **Email Address**

info@cnaf.net

### **Website Address**

www.cnaf.net

## How You Can Help

As a charitable organization, the Canadian National Autism Foundation strives to raise funds to achieve our goals and it is with the support of generous organizations, companies and people that we are able to put together fundraising events such as those we have had in the past in order to raise the funding needed.

At this time we are looking for financial support, and this can come in various forms:

- Sponsorship of portions of our events
- Donations of prizes for our events
- Purchase of tickets to our events
- Financial contributions directly towards our goals (i.e. research)

Charitable Organization  
#867189243 RR0001



## Ongoing Fundraisers

Do you buy books about Autism or any other topics online?  
Buy them through the Amazon.ca link on our site, and the CNAF will  
receive a percentage of your sale from Amazon.ca

### Disclaimer

The Canadian National Autism Foundation (CNAF) does not support, endorse or recommend any method, treatment, product, program or person for people suffering with autism spectrum disorders. The goal of our site and our responses to your questions is to provide accurate and up-to-date information about autism spectrum disorders. We believe everyone has the right to access all of the information available to them, allowing them to make their own individual choice.